Cheap Labour - main reason for new jobs.

Meanwhile in Ballymena… no Harmony.

Scousers Reject Electronic Arms Fair.

BLACK STAR

AS THE TALIBAN TAKE OVER

REFUGEES ARE WELCOME HERE!

As the Taliban consolidate their control across Afghanistan, anarchists in Derry joined a protest in the city in solidarity with the refugees seeking to escape another generation of invasion and war.

It follows demonstrations in many other places seeking to challenge both the lies spread by the NATO forces, who decimated the country from 2001 onwards, about the reasons for their actions and the refusal to accept responsibility for them and refuge for those displaced as a result.

The USA originally intervened in Afghanistan to undermine Soviet influence in the region. The USSR had invaded Afghanistan in 1979, to shore up the pro-Soviet government in Kabul. It fought a long war against mujahideen forces armed and trained by the USA. The Soviets pulled out in 1989. The USA funneled weapons and money through Pakistan with the Pakistan government favouring fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban. Following the collapse of the Soviet block the USA continued to support Pakistan while Pakistan continued to support the Taliban.

In the recently ended US occupation, with Britain serving as an obedient junior partner, as many as 100,000 Afghans have died. Almost 2,500 US troops and 4,000 American contractors have died. Nearly 500 British military personnel have been killed. All in a 20 year occupation that has cost over $1 trillion.

With the withdrawal, began by Trump and finished by Biden, coming to its conclusion the Taliban easily swept aside the corrupt puppet regime that had been installed. While most Afghans existed in grinding poverty President Ashraf Ghani fled to the United Arab Emirates with $169 million that he had looted.

The familiar scenes of refugees fleeing the Taliban are horrific. As the Taliban institute strict sharia law, consolidate their position over their rivals, and drive women out of public life and back into the home, the least we can do is extend the hand of friendship and solidarity to all those fleeing oppression and seeking a new life.

End of Capitalism or the End of the World?

The end of the world is nigh. Not Armageddon style, no horsemen of the apocalypse, no heavenly host, no army of the elect, and no zombies. What we do have are hurricanes, droughts, increasing temperatures, floods, wildfires, melting glaciers, rising water levels, climate refugees, wars over scarcer and scarcer resources and the imminent extinction of numerous species.

In the past, many socialists, anarchists among them, predicted that capitalism would either be overthrown by a social revolution or that it would destroy itself.

As Durruti put it, 'the bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We are not afraid of ruins. We carry a new world here, in our hearts.'

These days it is certainly easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine a successful social revolution. The problem with waiting around for the bourgeoisie to destroy its own world is the certainty that it will take us and a sizable chunk of life on this planet with it. The building of a new world has to be done quickly if it is to be done at all. The building must be done in our workplaces and our communities. We need to take the means of production into our own hands in order to halt the destruction of our lives and our planet.

The choice is a simple choice between capitalism and the survival of life on this planet. Anarchists believe that we can't look to state and government either. To paraphrase Kropotkin it is a choice between death brought about by states or the death of states themselves.

So, the end of capitalism and states or the end of humanity? Without one the other is inevitable. That is no choice at all. It's time to start acting as if our very existence was in the balance. Because it is. Organise!

Gas and Lecky Anarchism

Many of the poorest among us are set for a freezing winter as a near on 22% price hike looms! SSE Airtricity is set to increase our bills by nearly 22% next month. The company claims this will add an average of £112 to our gas bills - the figure seems a bit on the low side to us. Perhaps because its already too fucking expensive to keep our homes warm! Other suppliers will be following suit. The hike will of course hit the poor and working class hardest.

Worse the bill hike comes hot on the heels of an increase of over 10% to the price of our lecky. At the same time as the furlough scheme and that extra couple of quid on our Universal Credit are being withdrawn.

We can warm the cockles of our hearts in the knowledge that SSE Airtricity didn't take the decision to increase their profits at our expense lightly.

It looks like Brexit, the end of the grace period and the imposition of that pesky border in the Irish Sea is likely to see the drying up of essential medical supplies in the wee north - putting thousands of people who are dependent on medicines at risk.

As cases rise and more deaths have been recorded due to Covid19, Boris has come up with a novel way of disproportionately punishing the working-class. Again. He expects workers to pay an extra £200 in National Insurance contributions to, wait for it, pay for the NHS that successive Tory and Labour governments failed to fund, carved up and ran down.

Isn't it time we got rid of the parasites and ran things ourselves? On the basis of need not profit? We mean, its the working class who produced all the wealth after all.

WSF News from Pakistan

AFGHAN COMRADES RESCUED!
WSF HAS SUCCESSFULLY RESCUED AFGHAN COMRADES AND REFUGEES FROM THE TALIBAN, THEY ARE NOW WITH US IN PAKISTAN SAFE FROM THE TALIBAN.

The Workers Solidarity Federation, the new Friends of the International Workers Association (the anarcho-syndicalist international), has been busy rescuing anarchists fleeing the Taliban in Afghanistan, building an anarchist education project, recently held a celebration of the 150th anniversary Paris Commune in Karachi, and continued to build anarcho-syndicalism in Pakistan.

Our comrades at the Just Books Collective are happy to have contributed a selection of books and pamphlets to the WSF for translation and printing as part of their anarchist education project. All of us at Black Star extend our solidarity to our comrades in all their future endeavours.

Cheap Labour the Key!

Occasionally the mask drops. Yesterday the great gift of 120 manufacturing jobs for Belfast (actually Mallusk), was trumpeted by Invest NI and Stormont as a great success. The headlines almost universally screamed their acclaim for the investment by Australian mining technology firm, Tribe Tech, reporting enthusiastically how the company chose Northern Ireland because of its wealth of manufacturing expertise. Tribe Tech, however, added (to no-one's apparent embarrassment), that it was the lower labour costs associated with this part of the world that proved pivotal. Undoubtedly the £1 million bung from Invest NI via the taxes of workers here also proved somewhat of an incentive.

Just Books Secure New Space!

It is with great joy that our compañeras and compañeros at *Just Books - Belfast Anarchist Collective* are announcing that they have secured new premises for the project.

'Located in the Blackstaff Mill we will be moving in and getting things sorted over the next month or so. We hope to have the space up and running some time in mid to late October. It's almost exactly 2 years since we lost our space on King Street and the search for a new home was severely hampered by the pandemic and associated lock-downs and restrictions. But we are back and looking forward to meeting and working with new and old comrades. Some getting involved with anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist activity and organising for the first time while others are, we've heard, the stuff of "myth and legend".'

They will have ample space for their 'Peoples Library' and reading room to continue to grow, and space for meeting, discussion and events. It will also provide a base of operation for anarchists in the city and the Collectives recent move into publishing. Their first book, Maximoff's *Constructive Anarchism*, will be out later this year.

None of this would have been possible without the support of members of Organise! and other 'Friends of Just Books'. If you'd like to help make this next stage in Just Books development as success we strongly suggest you get in touch and become a 'Friend of Just Books' yourself. Email them at **justbooksbelfast@gmail.com** or check out their facebook page at **@justbooksbelfast.**

Meanwhile in Ballymena...

Some young un was up in court here the other week after being found in possession of a lock knife and knuckleduster at the 'Harmony Hub'. That's what the oul Broadway bandstand in the town centre was re-named as in 2018, when the council were trying to re-brand the area and bring in yet more developers and shit service sector jobs. They hauled away the nice old wan to the public park, which on the plus side might make it easier to have a can than in the toon centre these days, especially if some wee wanker might stick a knife in you!

In other news, Wrightbus have announced that 300 jobs are coming to Ballymena, though sounds like nearly half of these are contract extensions for temporary workers already working there. Apparently, it's all about the hydrogen buses though behind all the greenwash bollix from the Bamfords who now own Wrightbus, there are still a lot of questions about where the hydrogen for the fuel cells that power the buses comes from and just how sustainable the whole thing is. Nevertheless, for the workers who saved the company a few years back, this will be welcomed - though with a skeptical caution across the board.

The Liverpool Electronic Arms Fair

12th-13th October is the date chosen by European electronic arms manufacturers for their showcase event in Liverpool. The Council have said they can't interfere in commercial events, have concerns, but the mayor will miss the big 11th September protest march due to 'prior commitments'. Wonder if Thales/Shorts will be there?

Get Involved: Help Build An Anarchist Alternative.

Organise! is an anarchist political group in Ireland who take inspiration from the self directed struggles of working-class people, particularly those organised on anarcho-syndicalist lines. Our history goes back to the original formation of Organise! by the Ballymena and Antrim Anarchist Groups in 1985.

We are a small group of ordinary working class people who are fed up with being fucked about by the profit system, fed up with seeing our communities torn apart by racism, patriarchy, nationalism and sectarianism, and sick of a greedy few getting rich off everyone else's backs.

We are actively working to promote solidarity in opposition to capitalism, the state, patriarchy and all other forms of oppression and hierarchy. The way we organise reflects the free society we want to create: one based on voluntary association, democratic participation and self-management.

Our members are workers, claimants, students, migrants, unemployed and other working-class people committed to building a libertarian communist union movement actively opposed to all forms of oppression and exploitation.

We want to improve everyday conditions for ourselves and other working class people, but we also struggle for the revolutionary transformation that can create a free and equal society, one based on mutual aid and co-operation. Sound crazy? Maybe it does, but in an era in which it is easier to imagine the end of the world the continuation of the present system is even crazier…

The current system isn't working – stress and overwork affect more and more people while others are flung on the dole; for increasing amounts of workers it is precarity, zero hours contracts and the stress of being unable to plan or budget our lives; we live in a world of plentiful resources yet millions starve; some people make vast fortunes just because they own companies, land, property or natural resources, but those of us who create the wealth, work the land and build the properties are left struggling to pay for the natural resources; politicians tell us there's no money – not for wages, benefits or local amenities, but there's always plenty for war; both locally and globally the gap between the richest and the poorest sections of society has never been so great; instead of a war on poverty they've got a war on 'benefit fraud', while the same system that creates war, poverty and environmental destruction stigmatise, imprison and deport the resultant refugees.

We don't think these things are inevitable or coincidental, we think they are related to capitalism – an economic system defined by wage slavery and the accumulation of profit out of other people's work. So we support all workers against their bosses in demanding higher wages and better conditions. We try to intervene practically to support workers engaged in disputes and are also active in our own workplaces and communities. Not only against exploitation but against the multiple oppressions faced by members of the working class in all our diversity.

But it's not just a question of trying to struggle by in a world of exploitation and oppression; we look to a future where workers control production and society in their own interests. And unlike some people who claim to oppose capitalism, we don't want to be a new set of leaders and we refuse to be led by anyone else. We advocate direct democracy in the workplace and through the commune in our communities – working in federation to ensure that the needs of all are met and that no-one is ever again in a position to oppress or exploit another human being.

If you are interested in these ideas, we'd encourage you to explore the website and consider getting involved.

We currently have members in Belfast, Derry, Newtownabbey and Portadown and are building the organisation on the basis of active involvement and participation. We aren't interested in meaningless 'paper' membership so you can't join by filling in an online form and bunging us a few quid.

To talk to us about joining get the ball rolling, check out our website at https://organiseanarchistsireland.com and send an email to:

organiseasi@gmail.com